most familiar. Stock Exchanges fluctuated with his moods; if he went three times to hear *The Merry Widow* troops were disbanded and frontiers left unguarded; a partiality for an American actress aroused sudden hope that she might receive some of his passion, and Germany correspondingly less. Clergymen referred to him in their pulpits; novelists brought him into their novels and poets into their poems; politicians whom he had derided found consolation in being able to advertise themselves as having been attacked by Hitler, in the expectation of thereby attracting larger audiences to their meetings, and Sir Thomas Inskip told his constituents that Herr von Ribbentrop had been kind enough to inform him that a speech of his had given Hitler 'great satisfaction'.

If Hitler was indisposed, he was mortally ill,[7] while many believed that he had died already, and that one of several doubles was impersonating him, presumably not reflecting that in such a case the outlook was blacker than before his supposed demise, since it meant that his aims might still be achieved even though his leadership was not available. This theme was worked out in detail by an ingenious American in *The Man Who Killed Hitler^* which was serialised in the *Sunday Express^* where it was described as 'the most amazing book of modern times'. Its publisher, it was explained, had been threatened with death and kidnapped, but had refused to be intimidated; though admittedly fiction, 'all of it could happen. At the end you will wonder —"Did it really happen?" '

It is doubtful if any human being in his lifetime has ever before

so focused the attention of his fellows, so stirred up in them hatred or admiration, or, more often, a mixture of both. His appearance in power was signalised by a burning Parliament, and followed by a bonfire of books—Thomas Mann, Ernst Toller,

[7] The illness most commonly attributed to formidable foreigners (for instance, to Napoleon, Lenin and Mussolini) is syphilis. Hitler's reputation for chastity has prevented this attribution. Cancer is the second favourite, and with that he has often been credited—of the throat, that being, in his case, the organ most needing to be put out of action.